

The Republican.

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IMPORTANT VARIETY.

Machinery—Population—Phrenology—Marriage—Burial—Justice and Injustice—Sanity and Insanity.

THESE are the topics discussed in the present Number of "The Republican," and ably discussed.

On *machinery*, the question is:—Does it lessen, in the aggregate, the amount of manual or human labour? Here we have arguments for and against. The subject may be illustrated in the observation, that hard labour is by no means a desideratum to mankind, and that no objection would be made, could be rationally made, to the lessening of labour, if the means of subsistence could be obtained with the less of labour. The injury to the labourer arising from the lessening of his labour is not then to be attributed so much to the machinery that lessens, as to the machinery of government that taxes the produce of his labour to a great extent, and that throws serious impediments in the way of his raising food from the land or of transferring his labour to other objects where it may be more advantageously used. Another thing to be said for machinery is, that it produces an article superior to that which can be produced by manual labour.

On *population*, that first of political and moral subjects, we quote an illustrative extract sent by a correspondent, and as *phrenology* is mixed up with it, we add a few words in explanation of that science. Much remains to be done for mankind in teaching them the economy proper to be observed with respect to their physical powers, so as to increase their moral powers and to generate the greatest sum of happiness, to make the moral or intelligent passions predominate over the mere animal passions.

Marriage is not treated of as an evil in every sense; because it is of itself an indefinite word; but where evil is asserted, the relation is to the manner in which marriage is systematized and abused in this country.

On *burial*, the object of the correspondent is to attack the prejudices existing upon the disposal of dead bodies that in themselves are mere nuisances and that should, in all cases, wherever

practicable, be applied to the benefit of, and in no case be allowed to become an injury to, the living.

The case of Mr. Gourlay, a case deserving more of public attention than it has yet received, is the one which embraces the other heads of this article, combined with the other points of persecution there mentioned.

Discussion embraces the whole range of disputed points, and utility can triumph only where discussion is most free. Wicked are they who have impeded or do impede discussion of any kind. The advocate of free discussion makes an easy triumph over every opponent; for *he triumphs where he is defeated*, he triumphs wherever his ignorance is removed.

R. C.

MACHINERY—EMPLOYMENT--POPULATION.

(From *The Bolton Chronicle*.)

[We insert the following communication with much pleasure, because we think it relates to objects of vast importance at the present juncture. We are desirous of publishing every view of the great question of our national misery, that may be the result of research and thought, and which is discussed with temperance and ability. Discussion is now, for the most part, conducted with so little acrimony and invective, and a spirit of candour is becoming so prevalent, that we entertain hopes, eventually, to discover truth by this very means. In former times, disputation was the general signal for the disputants to become inveterately and enthusiastically wedded to the opinions which they perhaps originally embraced with little or no reflection; but we now hope better things—that mankind will not only agree to differ, but to embrace the sentiments of their opponents, if their opponents can shew that they are in error.—ED.]

PART I.

No man can safely affirm, that he may not be mistaken on any of the important subjects which influence the destinies of mankind, and this should make us tolerant and lenient towards one another; should teach us to "*bear and forbear*," should leave us open to conviction, and ready to change any opinion the moment it is proved to be erroneous. Knowledge alone can be beneficial, ignorance must always be injurious; let us then reason to arrive at truth and not victory. On whatsoever subject men differ in

opinion, both cannot be right, both may be wrong. One must be wrong. Great and exceedingly mischievous errors have been committed by all classes, and from such errors the working classes have by no means been exempted. It is only within a very short period that any suspicion was entertained by any considerable number of them, that it was possible for them to form erroneous notions, and even now the opinion prevails pretty generally among them, that they are the best judges of the causes of their own poverty and want of consequence in the world. They attribute their condition to the conduct of the Government, to their employers, to machinery, to any thing which can at the moment be made to account for their situation, except the true cause: they never suspect that this is to be found in their own conduct, and to be remedied only by their own prudence.

I have been led to these reflections by various essays which have appeared in *The Bolton Chronicle* and other papers. In these essays, it is denied,

1. That machinery is the cause of a greater number of hands being employed, than otherwise could be employed, and it is asserted, on the contrary, that the use of machinery reduces the quantity of employment for human beings.

2. It is denied, that the great increase of the population is a principal cause of the present distress of the people.

3. It is maintained, "that the increase of population cannot be the cause of any distress, so long as the great Creator of all things continues to send an adequate supply of every necessary of life."

These three short paragraphs contain the substance of the speculations of the great body of the working people, and of a considerable portion of those who are not compelled to work for their daily bread. But are they correct? If they are, let them be as widely disseminated as possible; if they are not, too much pains cannot be taken to prove how pernicious they must be. I maintain, that they are erroneous, and hope to induce some, at least, of those who indulge in them to reconsider, or rather, to re-examine the grounds which have induced them to believe them to be true.

That machinery is the means of employing a much greater number of persons than could otherwise be employed, has, I think, been proved by almost every writer on Political Economy, from Dr. Adam Smith, to Mr. Macculloch. Unfortunately, the books which contain the information, are least known to those whom they most concern. Three circumstances mainly contribute to prevent the working people obtaining knowledge. 1. The expense of books. 2. The want of leisure. 3. The want of desire for information. Several plans are in progress for the purpose of bringing information on some of the most important subjects within the reach of the working people. The desire for informa-

tion is every day increasing, and will, no doubt, be continually accelerated; as it becomes stronger, leisure will be found, and it is hardly too much to predict, that at no very distant period, the best informed among the working people will be instructed in every thing which relates to their condition in society.

As an elucidation of the first paragraph, let us take the cotton manufacture, it is the most recent of any of our great manufactures, it has been more talked about than any other of those manufactures, and is better and more generally understood than any other of them. Almost within the memory of persons now living, a piece of printed cotton was as valuable as silk: and long within the memory of many, printed calicoes were sold 3s. 6d. a-yard, which in the usual way of trade, have, of late years, been sold for 1s. a-yard.

Now, the *value* of every commodity produced by the hand of man, is regulated by the quantity of labour it requires to produce it. When printed calicoes sold for 3s. 6d. a-yard, the high price was occasioned by the quantity of labour required to grow the cotton, to transport it in ships, and to manufacture it into cloth. If a certain quantity of this calico required the labour of a man for three months, it is plain that its price must be enough to keep the labourer for three months, and give the usual profit of trade to his employer; and that, consequently, a man working at any other common trade, would be three months producing another commodity which would exchange for the calico; so that if a workman wanted a piece of calico for his family, he must work for several months, say four months, to obtain it. But as this was more than the working people could afford to pay for a piece of calico, they were obliged to put up with a coarser and worse commodity. This was also the case with every family in a small way of business, with persons of very limited income, and with a multitude of other persons, as well at home as abroad. The quantity of labour, or the equivalent in money to the quantity of labour, to purchase a piece of cotton goods, compelled people, in almost every rank in life, to purchase, comparatively small quantities; and as the demand was small, the quantity manufactured to supply the demand, was also small.

But, when a piece of cotton goods could be manufactured with one week's labour instead of three months' labour, it is plain that if wages continued at the same amount, a week's labour would now enable the labourer to purchase a piece of cotton goods; and as the demand for cotton goods would be greatly increased, so the supply would be increased as greatly. It is not pretended that the sums and times are exactly correct, nor is it necessary that it should be; they are approximations near enough to elucidate the fact alluded to. Those who are conversant with the manufacture, can state them more exactly.

That the introduction of machinery has lowered the price of

cotton goods, and brought them almost within the reach of every body, and greatly extended the market, is admitted; but, then, it is said, all this has been done by machinery alone, and not by manual labour, machinery has superseded the workman, and is the cause of so many being unemployed. Nothing can, however, be more erroneous; the fact is precisely the reverse. Machinery has all along increased the quantity of hand labour, and has not now, nor at any time, been the cause of putting large numbers of people out of employment.

Let us calmly enquire how the quantity of hand labour has been increased by means of machinery. The spinning wheel and hand loom, both valuable machines, were in use when cotton goods were as dear as silk goods; and cotton goods must have remained as dear as silk goods, had there been no improvement in machinery. At the time of which I am speaking, less than 20,000 persons were employed in the cotton manufacture, and had no new machinery been introduced, the number of persons employed could not have greatly increased, since the price of cotton goods, in consequence of the great quantity of labour necessary to produce them, would have prevented all but a small number of persons at home and abroad from becoming purchasers. But when by the introduction of machinery, the quantity of labour necessary to produce cotton goods, was lessened, and a piece of cotton goods could not be purchased with one month's labour, or the wages of one month's labour, instead of, as formerly, with three or four month's labour, the number of purchasers were greatly increased, and as the price continued to fall as machinery was introduced, the time came, when instead of 20,000 persons being able to produce all the cotton goods which could be sold, 500,000 could not supply the demand, and had not a much larger number than 500,000 persons been produced and brought into the trade all would have found constant employment at good wages. Improvements in machinery went on, the prices of cotton goods continued to fall, the number of purchasers continually increased, and at length there was employment for nearly, or quite a million of hands, a thing which never could have taken place but for improvements in machinery. It is very probable, that had no machinery been introduced, there would not have been employment for 50,000 people, that is, for one in twenty, which on an average of the last five years, have been actually employed. But, as was the case when employment was provided for 500,000, there were 600,000, or perhaps a larger number, found to do the work of the 500,000, so when employment was provided for a million of people, twelve hundred thousand or more were found to do the work of the million; and, to use a common mode of expressing the fact, "*they eat up one another.*" By their own competition they reduced their own wages from 30s. a-week to 6s. a-week. It cannot be truly said that people were brought from other em-

ployment to the cotton manufacture, for all the great branches of manufactures have increased the number of hands in proportion to the improvement of machinery. and the quantity used in each of these manufactories, and yet, in every one of them there is a redundancy of work-people. Is not this a demonstration, that "*machinery is the means of employing a greater number of hands, than could otherwise be employed ;*" and also, that the great increase in the number of the people beyond the number which can be employed, is the cause that wages are so low, that vast numbers of the industrious, pains-taking, worthy people, are half-starved even while fully employed : and that when any of those fluctuations to which trade is and always must be liable happens, horrid misery falls upon nearly the whole of them ?

If the population were not redundant, it would be *impossible* for wages to be low, and it is equally impossible that with a redundant population wages can be high. Had no more hands been produced than the fair demand for labour required, had there been, say a million, instead of twelve or thirteen hundred thousand in the cotton manufacture. If, instead of doubling the number of hands in the silk manufacture, within the last ten years, only a few hands had been added, it is quite clear that the immense stocks of cotton and silk goods could not have been produced ; that there would have been a steady demand for all that was produced, and that the whole of the persons employed in the silk and cotton manufactures, would have had constant employment, at good wages.

In those trades where stocks could not be thus accumulated, no such want of employment has been experienced. It is true, that from other causes, all trades have suffered some depression, and it may safely be affirmed, that all trades will, at no very distant period, again flourish ; but it does not follow, that in those branches which are greatly overhanded, wages will rise, or that the whole of the hands will be employed. I have, I think, fairly shewn that machinery produces employment for multitudes of persons, who, but for machinery, never could be employed ; and that if in the race between machinery and population, machinery had beaten population, instead of population beating machinery, the working-people would, as a body, have been in a much better situation than they ever were at any former period since the creation. If the working people generally had good wages, they would be expended so much more usefully than formerly, and the progress of information, and good habits, would be so rapidly accelerated, as to place the working people in a situation, which but few of them can appreciate.

If they who believe that machinery is injurious to the working people, will push their enquiries into other branches of business, they will find that in every one of them, machinery has increased the quantity of hand-labour, and this, too, in spite of the mono-

polies and impolitic taxes which press heavily upon them. It may, perhaps, be found in some cases, machinery has reduced the number of hands in a particular department of a business, but it will also be found to have increased the number of hands in a much greater amount in other departments.

It is worse than useless to refrain from pushing our enquiries on these important subjects to their conclusions, however much these conclusions may be at variance with our preconceived opinions. The consequences to which any enquiry may lead, cannot be changed by our shutting our eyes and refusing to see them. The consequences which necessarily result from any course of actions, cannot be set aside by our obstinacy and ignorance ; but the greatest evils may be produced by that miserable self-deception, so generally practised, which induces most men to hug their prejudices instead of pushing their enquiries to the utmost, without fear of ascertaining the truth, however inimical that truth may be to their wishes.

PART II.

It would have been more logical to have proved first that population could be redundant, and second that it was redundant, before shewing that it was this redundant population which prevented the working people benefitting by the use of machinery to the extent which they might be thereby benefitted ; but the two subjects could not be treated of separately, without making this essay much longer.

The notion expressed in the third paragraph is so common, so erroneous, and so mischievous, as to deserve a separate elucidation.

The assertion copied literally, is, that "the increase of population cannot be the cause of *any* distress, so long as the great Creator of all things continues to send an adequate supply of every necessary of life."

The writer means, although his mode of expressing his meaning is somewhat obscure, that "the great Creator" does at all times send an adequate supply of every necessary of life for all the human beings which are born or which could be born.—This is an error. The Creator does not send an adequate supply of every necessary, or of any necessary of life for all the people which either are born or which might be born, any more than he sends land on which all the seeds of a tree, say all the beech mast, which is produced might be planted and reared without end, or any more than that all the millions of eggs in the roe of every cod-fish might be vivified and continue to propagate without end. The Creator has given the earth to mankind, has endowed them with the power to cultivate it, and has told them plainly that un-

less they so cultivate it, it shall produce nothing: "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread—cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life." Such is the denunciation of the Creator, such are the terms on which alone mankind are permitted to exist; and nothing could be well more absurd than the assertion, that "the great Creator sends an adequate supply of every necessary of life." With the earth; as the means of procuring sustenance, the Creator has given reason to man as his guide, as the means of procuring him such a portion of happiness as by his nature he is able to enjoy in this world. But the Creator has also given to man the power to abuse and misuse his reason, telling him that this abuse and misuse of so important a gift shall meet its due reward in the punishments which must follow the abuse, and these are unhappiness, misery, and premature death. The Creator has given to every human being the capability of using every one of his powers in excess, and has bestowed reason upon him to restrain him from using any one of his powers in excess. The Creator has given means to end only in a limited way as to the production of food; and these are very different indeed from the common fallacy, expressed by the words, "an adequate supply of every necessary of life," or "that God never sends mouths but he sends meat."

For the purpose of a clearer elucidation, let us take as an example our own country, and thus show—1st. that population can be excessive, and 2d. that the consequences of excessive population must inevitably be, poverty, misery, vice, crime, disease and premature death, to a vast portion of the people.

England was once in a state similar to that of New Holland now. In New Holland the natives are so ignorant as neither to plant nor sow, nor build huts, nor to have forecast to enable them to provide in any way against future want, and the consequence is that they are very miserable and very few in number; there not being one human being where a hundred thousand might be, and probably will be within the next 200 years. That the inhabitants of this island were once in the state of the New Hollanders there can be no doubt. As they gradually emerged from this savage state, and took to rearing of cattle, their number increased as the means of subsistence increased; still the number which could exist in the pastoral state must have been small. As knowledge increased, they by degrees took to a rude mode of agriculture, and as by these means the quantity of subsistence increased, so did their number increase, but all along up to the present time and now, no more people could or can exist than the number which the knowledge and habits of the people can provide for; all that are born beyond this number must die, and so long as the custom of producing more children than the knowledge and habits of the country supplies with food in abundance, so long will there be a vast number of people in a dreadful state of irre-

mediable misery, and all that are born beyond a certain number will inevitably perish. It matters not what may be the form of government, or how well disposed every person may be to assist every other person, only a certain number can remain alive, and if any considerable number beyond this is produced, nothing can save the great body of the people from abject poverty and all its attendant evils. This is the principle of population which has at all times and in all places been, and is now and must continue its operation.

Is it not then evident that people cannot increase faster than knowledge and the accumulation of capital will enable them to increase the quantity of the necessaries of life?

We have now in Great Britain fifteen millions of people, and had the knowledge we now possess, and the capital we now possess, existed two thousand years ago, the same number of people would then have existed, instead of there being as probably there then was, not one person for every ten thousand Great Britain now contains. More knowledge, better machinery, and better modes of agriculture, will in time enable the people of this country to double their present number, and this under similar circumstances might have happened two thousand years ago; the capability of producing human beings was no doubt the same at all times. Why then were there not thirty millions of people in this country two thousand years ago? Why were there not thirty millions of people at any period since that time? Why are there not thirty millions of people now? The answer to these questions is short, clear, and conclusive—the number has all along been limited by the quantity of food produced, and the quantity of food has been limited by the knowledge and capital the people possessed.

Let us take another mode of illustrating this important subject, the power of mankind to increase, supposing that power to be used as it might be used if the Creator did really send food for all that could be brought into existence. A boy and girl at a very early age could produce children, and under the circumstances supposed, every woman, one with another, might have twelve or fourteen children, and the period in which the whole people might be doubled would be very short. I will not, however, push the hypothesis to a conclusion, but will take a particular and practical example within our own cognizance. In the United States of North America, the number of people has been doubled six times in less than 150 years, and thus it is proved that so long as food can be produced and capital accumulated sufficiently fast, the number of people may be doubled every twenty-five years. Let us then suppose, that a thousand years ago the number of people in Great Britain was one million, and that they double their number every twenty-five years, the account would stand thus:—

In the year 825	1,000,000 persons.
850	2,000,000
875	4,000,000
900	8,000,000
925	16,000,000
950	32,000,000
975	64,000,000
1000	128,000,000
1025	256,000,000

Here we see that at the end of two hundred years the number of people would be 256,000,000, and if any one will take the trouble to carry out the table to the year 1825, he will find the number to be 1,099,511,627.776,000,000—that is, 73,300,775,185 times the number of people now in Great Britain.

England, Scotland, and Wales contain 75,000,000 of acres, and thus there would be no less than 14,660,155,037 persons to every acre, and as an acre contains 4840 square yards, there would be 3,028,957 persons to every square yard; and as every square yard contains 9 square feet, there would be 336,550 persons to every square foot.—These inferences seem ridiculous, but they are the fair results to which the assertion leads, that “God never sends mouths but he sends meat,” or that “the great Creator of all things sends an adequate supply of every necessary of life.” To those who cannot reason on general principles, as well as to those who have not been accustomed to reason on general principles, matters must be made plain practically, or they will never be understood at all, and it frequently happens, that prejudices can be exposed in no other way than by pushing them to the absurd conclusion to which they lead.

Not only have I shewn that “the great Creator” does not send “an adequate supply of every necessary of life,” but I have furnished matter for reflection and curious calculation, which can scarcely fail to be both amusing and instructing to many.

F. P.

London, August 1st, 1826.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REPUBLICAN.

SIR,

WHEN I addressed you, a few days since, it was far from my intention (as it is now) to enter into a controversy upon the subject of machinery. I then told you that I lacked ability and in-

formation; and I am sorry to say my stock of knowledge has received very little increase since that period. I must, however, with your permission, make a few further remarks upon the subject, in consequence of F. P.'s communication of Friday last.

I give that gentleman full credit for goodness of intention, and he has done the same by me: but though we have thus shaken hands there is no reason why we should not endeavour amicably to detect each other's errors and misconceptions.

I did not intend to infer, that F. P. would have had Mr. Single's letter rejected by the Editor of The Trades' newspaper, but I certainly did think he replied to him with an air of contempt which the occasion did not warrant. I dismiss, however, this unimportant part of the subject by leaving the phrase "*even Mr. Thomas Single*" to the interpretation of the most "careless reader."

Now, Sir, for the more important part of the business: and that I may avoid the misrepresentation of quoting too little, I will in the present article make no quotation at all. I suppose, as a matter of course, that whoever reads my letter will read, or have read, that which occasioned it, and be able to appreciate them equally: if he do not he is idle or unjust, and his opinions can be of no consequence either to F. P. or any other person.

F. P. asserts, that machinery has a tendency to lessen the cost of production; which is doubtless the case; but admitting that it enables the agriculturist to bring his corn to market at a cost of five shillings a quarter less than he otherwise could, what benefit is that to the working hand, whilst employment is scarce, wages low, and provisions dear? I must have no *ifs* about the corn laws, &c.; let us look to things as they are. Machinery might, unquestionably, be employed for the advantage of the labouring part of the community, but is it so? If you were to go and ask the poor woman whom I saw six weeks ago, in the middle of summer, and in the best part of one of the first agricultural counties in England, labouring in the open fields for the miserable stipend of *one shilling per week*, she would answer in the language of nature and of truth, "I don't know, Sir, I dare say what you speak of are very fine things, but I don't find that they do any good to poor folk." This woman's low rate of wages is an extreme case I admit, but it is a true one: the gradations of agricultural wages in that district range from one shilling a-week to nine. The latter is considered a princely income for an able-bodied man. To talk of people having surplus money to expend when all their earnings, added to the weekly pittance obtained at the parish board, will not provide food enough to satisfy the cravings of hunger, is mockery of the cruellest description.

F. P. asserts that there are more people employed in agricultural labour now than five and twenty years ago. I deny the fact. But admitting it to be true, unless he can prove that they receive

individually for their labour more bread and beer, and pork and clothing, than their predecessors did, what benefit do they derive from cheap production and agricultural improvements? I am tempted to think they would be as well off with a pig in the sty, a goose upon the common, their pewter upon the shelf, and their beer in the *buttery*, as they are now with their rags and wretchedness and threshing machines, and Holkham and Woburn sheep-shearings!

I am told to push my enquiries in the right direction. Sir, I have witnessed the scenes and circumstances to which I allude. I was accustomed to agricultural employment in my earliest years: I am nearly connected with some of the best farmers in the kingdom; I have seen and enjoyed the former comfort—the comparative riches—of the peasant's cot, and I am well acquainted with its present miserable and hopeless state of destitution.

But, I shall be answered, "We speak of the *whole* quantity of employment, and not of a particular branch of business." Well, shew me that the whole mass of labourers and operatives throughout the kingdom, are better off, that they have more of the necessaries and comforts of life than formerly, and I will give up the point immediately.

With respect to "the spinning of woollen and cotton yarn," I re-assert, that there is not a fourth part of the number of "*women and children*" (mark the description, for F. P. has adroitly, or *carelessly*, substituted the word "people") employed in that branch that there were formerly. Besides which, our spinning-wheel grandmothers were clean, and healthy, and domesticated; but our poor spinning-jenny cotemporaries are dirty, sickly, and helpless. Doubtless a great number of women and children are or have been employed in the factory spinning process; it is calculated that 57,000 looms have been going at once in England, Ireland, and Scotland, and that they would produce 376,200,000 square yards of cloth in a year! But if we allow one woman and one child (as spinners) to every loom, which is, I apprehend, considerably above the average, we have only 114,000, whereas, I have reason to think that before the introduction of machinery there were at least half a million of women and children employed in spinning and winding.

A cottage housewife, with one or two little girls of six or seven years old, would in my remembrance earn seven shillings a week, and attend to the domestic comforts of the family; whilst the husband was able to earn from nine to twelve shillings more.

"Look on *this* picture, and on *this*"—

The agricultural labourer and his family, if they cannot earn as much as will purchase *half a peck of flour for each individual, and sixpence more per week*, (which is a very common case) receive the difference from the parish overseer.

It may be true that machinery, by producing things at less cost, leaves a surplus, which will be laid out in other commodities; but it is pretty evident that the labourers and operatives in general get none of this surplus: who *does* get it then? Where goes it? And what commodities are bought with it? I believe it passes through the hands of the farmer, the steward, the lawyer, the landlord, the parson, the upholsterer, the jeweller, the wine-merchant, the manufacturer, &c., and, no doubt, some of it sometimes sticks by the way; but the chief commodities ultimately purchased with it are—TAXES.

"Poh! nonsense!" cries my antagonist, "who ever heard of buying taxes? There is not such an idea in all the works of Jeremy Bentham and Adam Smith." Perhaps not; but it is true notwithstanding. Sixty millions of pounds a year are collected by Government in taxes: every one knows *that*. I maintain that such a sum could not be collected without the co-operation of machinery. Let him disprove it who can.

Well, then, is not machinery good? Yes, under conditions as I said before: *but not as employed merely to enable the nation to bear this enormous and unnecessary load of fiscal imposition*. But where go these taxes ultimately? Are they not paid to my Lord Claretlip, to Sir Henry Hazard, to Lady Lopewell, and to Mrs. Saintly? And do they not again descend upon the people like the fertilizing dews of Heaven?

Not so fast, if you please, good Mr. Canning—I admire your talents, and you and I together have wound up the last period very prettily: but when Mrs. Saintly gives me any part of her dividend, she generally expects either labour or goods in return—"the dews of heaven" descend gratuitously upon rich and poor, upon the just and the unjust. And, Sir, if the industrious classes of the community could contrive to keep fifty millions of these sixty *amongst themselves*, instead of sending them to Sir Henry Hazard and Lady Lopewell to be squandered amongst their *Mara's* and their *Velluti's*, and their less estimable associates—would it not be quite as well for them and the nation at large? Would not these industrious people spend it in procuring those articles of food, and clothing, and furniture, which they so much stand in need of? And what matters it to me, whether I give my labour and goods to the peasant or the peer, so that I but receive an equivalent?

J. F.

Aug. 14, 1826.

PHRENOLOGY—POPULATION.

A SERIES of letters has appeared in the "Literary Gazette and Journal of the Belles Lettres," under the title of "Sketches of Society." Those, which have lately been inserted, have been written in Paris, by a man of considerable talents; an accurate observer of manners, evidently enjoying opportunities of no common kind for observing the condition of society. In the number published on Saturday last, Aug. 12, is Letter XV, from which the following extract is taken:

"I wonder whether Dr. Gall and Spurzheim have ever been able to discover the organ of philoprogenitiveness in a French head? That bump must surely be missing in all who send their children to the Foundling Hospital, or phrenology is not worth a farthing. Now that I am on the subject of phrenology, I think that aforesaid organ must be wanting in the French generally. Nothing is more common than to hear a lady say, 'I have had two children. I will have no more.' And, strange to say, the prediction is accomplished. It is extremely rare to see a French family with half-a-dozen children. There are two reasons, I am told—1. The expence of bringing them up.—2. What is considered vastly important, their being a drawback on the pleasures of the mother. The delights of the opera and the ball must not be sacrificed to a parcel of brats; besides, they would make her look so old, and then, *who could support the ridicule of being pointed out as having half-a-dozen children, when it is the custom not to exceed two.*"

There is an English lady living at Versailles, who has nine children, she is very lusty, and very remarkable on account of her numerous family. She is known among the French ladies by a phrase not at all indelicate as expressed in the French language, but which, if literally translated, would be—"the great sow."

The phrenologists will find obstinate opponents in those who think that education makes all or nearly all the difference among mankind. Individually, I stand midway between them, allowing one-half of the difference to organization and the other half to education. I see great changes worked in the human character by education; but I see as great a permanent difference arising from state or quality of body. I have examined the subject attentively and find that I can neither yield all to the phrenologists nor all to the education people, where they battle for system.

The education people grant that an exercise of particular organs will produce changes in those organs; and the phrenologists admit the same thing after asserting the organic predisposition to exercise those particular organs. Many cases in proof may be

started on each side, so as to put the general rule under a state of arrest and suspension.

The science of phrenology and the science of education are alike annihilative of religion or the doctrine of souls and spirits. They exhibit mankind in a state of self-sufficiency for all the improvements that can be made in the human character. All extraneous or super-human power is set at nought. Indeed, in all cases of scientific research, it must be put aside, and nothing but visible realities contemplated. It would be well, if the phrenologists would speak out upon this the most important point in their science. They make sad blunders, when they attempt to support phrenologically any thing that comes under the head of religion. The clergy of the country see clearly that phrenology is an Atheistical science, and they generally oppose it on that ground. The phrenologists, therefore, will make more rapid progress, in taking the open ground and in shewing, that, if their science be Atheistical, it is the science of man. And the advocates for *education as the basis of character*, whose doctrine makes religious acquirements a matter of education, and not an organic attainment, excluding, also, superhuman power from the formation of mind, will do well to admit all that they can admit honestly of the utility of the science of phrenology. R. C.

A PAGE AND A HALF TO FILL UP!

Is an awful sound to a scribbler, when he has no subject, and wants to be at something else. There is no greater bore than to have to write by measure, and this is the reason why periodical works do not display on an average the same research, ability, and depth of mind, as works on which the writers have taken the time they wished. A public writer should not have his time and attention occupied with matters foreign to his peculiar profession, whereas, as yet, I, from taste, habit, or necessity, am still obliged to be a man of all work, and still looking forward to emancipation! Emancipation! thou "pleasing, dreadful sound!" Hope of the slave, dread of the tyrant when conquered, delusion of the weak, and attendant only on the bold and fearless, thou art more often talked of than found.

Here are a number of strange workmen about the house, in all parts of it, and where can one find a corner to sit in quietly and unmolestedly? This, too, is a bore. The sorrows of every class of writers have been intruded on the public, but what are they in comparison with the sorrows of a political writer in periodicals, in the month of August, in London, when the people of the town are as careless about reading as he possibly can be about writ-

ing? Besides, the town is full of sorrows. No work, no trade, is the common cry, and no hope until the festival of Saint Bartholomew has gone by. Then all begins to brighten, then the candles are lit in the evening, sorrows vanish as business goes cheerily on, and the lovers of festivals think of nothing but preparation for the Saturnalia of the Christians, or Christmas tide.

The Rev. Mr. Taylor is the only preacher in town that can boast of a crowded congregation of hearers at this season. He is the only clergyman who has need of a larger church. His Liturgy is of the *blatherum skite** order, though novel, and will suit those well whom nothing but nonsense will amuse; but his pulpit discourses are alike novel, eloquent, and useful.

In addition to strange workmen, one has the sorrow of finding them money, (or comfort when it can be found) when money is either scarce or closeted. This is not the least part of the evil attending this sultry season, and the music of Orpheus is necessary to me to make the multitude buy my books, while the brain is in such a state of lassitude from heat. My new shop comes up to all fair expectation; but it does not bring me in all the money that I want at this moment. I am secure for ten years; but the first will be a year of pecuniary difficulties, in the redemption of the mortgage incurred. So, pray friends, come buy. Let the good which I have done, and purpose to do, be the music that shall charm you to the entrance of my shop. Buy now, if you do not read until the winter.

The Chaplain of the Cold Bath Fields' Prison says, that I shall not keep a shop open seven years, if I am allowed to proceed without molestation. He claims to be considered one of the prophets of the Lord; but let us try if we cannot make him one of the Lord's lying prophets. These men can calculate nothing so well as tythes, and are at a loss to account for the success of persevering industry. Mr. Parkins, the late Sheriff, has had a conversion to Christianity, because nothing has succeeded with him since the time of my trial. On asking him and the Chaplain at different times how it was that I succeeded so well without the aid of their Divine Providence, each answered, that I had the permission of that Divine Power to succeed for a short time, that my fall may become the greater!

The page and half is filled, so, good reader, *farewell*, as the Reverend Mr. Taylor says to his audience at the close of his sermon—*farewell*; but do not forget to buy some books in these money-wanting times.

R. C.

* A flash word with this Reverend Gentleman, when describing the labours of his brethren in the vineyard of Christ.

ON SUPERSTITION.

It would be well, if they who have emancipated themselves from the superstition of the priest, would also emancipate themselves from the superstition of words. This latter superstition is a bar to knowledge and a source of endless, unintelligible disputes. No word should be used unless it conveys an intelligible and clear idea; or which, when joined with others in a sentence, conveys such an idea, or, in other words, produces such an idea in whoever reads it, or hears it; I may add, produces the same idea in the reader or hearer as the writer or speaker himself had: if it do not, this is the word or sentence worse than useless, since, instead of imparting and propagating knowledge, it causes confusion or doubt, or both, and is an impediment to the acquisition of knowledge.

One of these general unmeaning words, which have no corresponding idea, and consequently can excite no corresponding idea, is "*eternity*." Numerous are the books, immense is the number of essays, in which this and other similar and unmeaning words have consumed the time, wasted the money, and prevented the progress of knowledge in the writers and readers. The "*Republican*" contains many examples, and among them that of Thomas Turton, in the Number now before me. Mr. Turton might have used the words "*eternal*" and "*eternity*" without having been open to the objections I am making, had he defined the meaning accurately in which he wished the words to be understood and had he used them in that sense and in no other from the beginning to the end of his essay: notwithstanding, it would have been much better not to have used words which in their common acceptation have no meaning whatever.

But Mr. Turton has not defined the word *eternity*, and in no part of his essay does it express a clear idea.

Dr. Watson, he remarks, has said, "that the *elements* of matter never had a beginning, that they are eternal." Here, then, is Dr. Watson's definition of eternal—that which never had a beginning; but this is neither more nor less than making use of a number of words without expressing or conveying an idea. Can Dr. Watson, or Mr. Turton, or any body else conceive what the Doctor supposes he has conceived by the words "*never had a beginning*?" Surely not. If Mr. Turton will turn his thoughts to the no beginning, he will soon discover that he has no idea whatever to attach to the words, all he will ever discover will be his own ignorance in this respect; and he may probably be tempted to say, "I know nothing, and the words are only a cover for my want of knowledge." He need not be ashamed of coming

to this conclusion, for no man can truly say that he has any knowledge on the subject; the most he can have is a loose conjecture, carried as far back as he may be disposed to suppose, but he must stop at some period, at which he will be just as remote from his object as he was when he set out. But the "*elements of matter*"—see how one absurdity leads to another; Dr. Watson was unwilling to admit, that what he called matter underwent no change, hence he *assumed* elements which did not, because they could not change. But this assumption proved nothing, they only shewed that he was bewildered, yet upon this bewilderment he built his "*eternity*;" and every man who talks of *eternity*, and endeavours to shew that any thing is or can be eternal, must do it by some such illogical process, and of course from nothing.

Mr. Turton, however, adopts the definition of Dr. Watson, and argues thus—"viewing matter as the eternal cause, and every identity one of its effects, may we not imagine every animal, vegetable, and mineral in existence as extinct, and the *elements of matter* remaining?" That is, cannot we imagine the annihilation of matter, and yet that its elements are all in existence? I say, that these words have no meaning; and that any man who is capable of examining them, must come to the same conclusion, that they are words without meaning, as he must with respect to those which follow, namely, "whatever is eternal must be independent of every other existence." Having no idea of "eternal," because no man can have any such idea, Mr. Turton, like all those who use words so loosely, makes a bold and unintelligible assertion, and thinks he is reasoning to a purpose.

Has Mr. Turton ever asked himself what is matter? I suspect he has not, and I therefore recommend him to ask himself the question, and then to sit down and write a definition of the word which shall please himself, and leave him in no doubt as to the correctness of his definition.

Eternity—Chance—Accident—Nature—Truth—Justice—Virtue—Mind—Soul—Spirit—God—and many other words, except when limited and defined, have no meaning, as for instance, Eternity may be defined to mean a period of time of which we can form no idea, in any other sense it is absurd; and for this, it is better not to use the word, since it usually induces those who use it, and those who hear it, or read it, to think inaccurately.

CHANCE and ACCIDENT may be classed together. They have no meaning, except in relation to some particular circumstance, and then they are used improperly. A man has met with an accident; he has been run over by the wheel of a coach. Here the meaning is, that he did not intend to be run over, yet his being run over was as much the consequence of certain circumstances as any act of his life. As necessary as the most premeditated act, but the word accident is generally understood to imply, uncaused, and thus absurdly to account for what might be reasonably ac-

counted for. The word is also redundant, and therefore useless. A man accidentally fell under the wheel of a coach, and was run over—leave out the word “accidentally” and the meaning will not be mistaken. The sentence will not be perfect, because it does not contain the words, “fell, not intending to fall,” or words to that effect; but our language abounds in hiatuses, and yet we are not misled: but by using the word *accident*, we conjure up an occult cause for the man’s misfortune, and this is superstition.

Chance is open to the same objections and to one more, “Do you think that the world was made by chance?” is a common expression among Christians and Deists, as if a word which unless used in the particular sense before mentioned has no meaning could make any thing.

Mr. Horne Tooke says that chance and accident both mean, “*falling*,” so that when a man says it fell by chance or accident, he in fact says it fell by falling.

NATURE is another vague and generally unmeaning word, used also to express an occult cause of which no one can form an idea. Like *chance* and *accident*, to be intelligible it must be specific—as for instance, it is the nature of a man to walk: even here it expresses no idea, and is wholly redundant; but let any one take a passage in which the word nature is used, and try if he cannot express the meaning better without the word than with it, and he will soon find it is useless. But *nature*, like *chance* and *accident*, is very frequently personified: thus *nature* does this and that. Nature causes a tree to grow, what can be more absurd; nature is here used for an unknown power, and is yet made the known power. The known power which is unknown is nature: can any thing be more absurd. Would it not be better to say that the tree grows—a fact which will not be disputed—than to pretend to account for its growth by the use of a word which conveys no idea. It is the nature of smoke to ascend. Of what use is the word nature? None, whatever. Why not say smoke ascends, and cease to mislead, by the use of words, which are, after all, nothing but an affectation of knowledge which you do not possess.

TRUTH—JUSTICE—VIRTUE.—These words when not applied to some particular act have no meaning. There is no *general* or *abstract truth*, *justice*, or *virtue*, and yet nothing is more common than the use of those words, as of things *per se*, that is, as things in themselves. When a man says—what you tell me is true, or a truth, we know that he means, either that the relation is correct, or that, he is satisfied we do not wish to deceive him, and to those and such like meanings, and for particular and specific objects, the word may be used; but when used in any other sense, it conveys no idea whatever.

JUSTICE is liable to the same objection, and so is *virtue*.

MIND is as vague a word as any that has been noticed. Ge-

nerally it misleads the hearer. Seldom does the writer or speaker attach any distinct idea to it. Any one can soon satisfy himself of this. Let him take up any book in which the word is frequently used and he will not fail to find that it is used in several senses, and still more frequently without any definite meaning. Let him compare the senses in which it is used, and he will soon be ashamed of his author. Let him do the same by himself, and he will soon abstain from the use of the word.

SPIRIT is a word used without any intelligible meaning: no one can find any idea of *spirit*, it cannot be compared with any thing, and must always remain unintelligible.

GOD.—The same objections are applicable to this word, except when used in respect to some specific thing called an *Idol*, thus the word has a meaning. This block of wood, this stone is *God*, i. e. you are to believe that this wood, or this stone, has power to do you good or evil, and you are to praise or fear it accordingly. So far as *God* is the name of the wood or stone it is intelligible; so far as it implies power to do either injury or service it is unintelligible, and can convey no clear idea, nor, indeed, any idea at all, unless fear, which in this, as in most cases, is the reverse of reason, can be called an intelligible idea, yet it may be observed, that fear is always a consequence of the absence of clear ideas.

These remarks are hastily sketched, for the consideration of those who, having divested themselves of a number of delusive and ingenious fallacies, yet cling to the fallacies which certain words, by the association of ideas, constantly produce.

A. Z.

ON THE PRESENT MARRIAGE SYSTEM.

A CONTINUAL dropping, says the old proverb, will wear away stones; and a continual attack on a mischievous system must have the same effect; must, in time, make an impression on the system attacked, and eventually work its destruction. That this may prove the fate of the present marriage system, must be the wish of every philanthropist who understands the matter; and I, as one anxious to merit the above appellation, will war against it at all opportunities. That the present marriage system is the greatest pest, the greatest curse of social life, is an assertion that I fearlessly make and support whenever I have an opportunity, be the hearers who or what they may. The system itself is so absurd, and its bad effects so glaring, that arguments are never wanting.

I may be told, that it is useless to war against a system so firmly supported by the priests, and by the prejudices of a large

majority of their votaries. But I do not think it useless. Although the number who are now favourable to a more rational system of marriage, compose but a small minority, still they have a good cause in hand, and aided by the present progress of the spirit of inquiry, must eventually number a majority on their side. While the priests have so much power, the evils of the present system will remain; it is only after their overthrow that any material alteration can take place; but it is necessary that the people should be led to see the evils now, or they will not remove them when they possess the power. The present prejudices must be first removed, and that is not to be done in a day nor in a year. Besides, the system is a part and parcel of the priestly craft, and by exposing the evils which result from this one branch, we hasten the downfall of the whole.

Our great poet, Milton, *felt* the evils of the present marriage system, and wrote against them. So did Peter Annett, and so have many others. The author of the *Life of Dumarsais*, a French philosopher, says, that *he* (Dumarsais) *was unfortunate in marriage, his wife being a complete modern Xantippe*; and adds, *to this cause we are indebted for an Essay on Marriage, found among the papers of our philosopher*. These opposers of the present marriage system may be suspected of writing from wounded feelings and not from principle, not from any thing which Reason might have dictated to them as fundamentally wrong in the system. This may be true as to their first inducement to write, but a perusal of their productions will prove that they discovered sufficient reasons to warrant them in their undertaking. But even these objections cannot be applied to all who have written against the present system; some have not immediately suffered from it, but have written against it solely from principle; and I can safely say that I am about to add one to this latter class of persons.

Marriage is necessary, or, at least, beneficial to the happiness of social life, so far as it confines the sexual union to two persons, and makes provision for the maintenance of children. All beyond this is mischievous. The contract is entered into by the parties in the hope of increasing each other's happiness; and it ought to be binding no longer than it answers this purpose. But any two persons who may enter the marriage state, under the present system, are bound to each other for life, although circumstances, happening subsequent to their union, may make the marriage state a curse rather than a blessing.

Marriage is now a religious contract, or, at least, it is surrounded with a religious ceremony and drawn up by the priests. It ought to be a civil contract, entered into before magistrates or other civil officers. To prevent hasty and ill-advised marriages, it may be proper to give a few weeks' notice; but this could be done just as easily in a police-office or justice-room as in a

church. Notice could be given at one sitting, of the marriages intended for the next; and no more ceremony is necessary than that the parties should appear, with two or more witnesses, and sign the contract. The absurdity and injustice of making all persons who wish to enter the marriage state, no matter what their religious opinions, to go through a long ceremony in a church, must be glaring even to the favoured priests themselves. It is the emolument that makes them hold so fast by the present system, that made them such strenuous opposers of the Unitarian Marriage Bill which was brought into the House of Commons a few years since.

Marriage is now a contract for life. It ought to be so no longer than it conduces to the happiness of the persons concerned. A divorce ought to be as easily obtained as the first contract; and it ought to be done in the same public manner before magistrates. Perhaps a notice of such an intention would be advisable; and to prevent hasty separations, such as might arise from passion, and where the parties upon reflection might not desire to be separated, the notice may be given for a longer time than in the case of marriage; say three or six months, a sufficient time for reflection. If the parties, or the complaining party, appeared at the expiration of the time embraced by the notice, the divorce should be complete; if they did not appear, the notice to be void, not a ground of divorce at any subsequent period.

The present system makes it imperative on fathers to support their offspring. The same should be done under any other system, provided there were no articles in the marriage-contract which bound the parties in any other way. Every marriage-contract should embrace some articles as to the arrangement of property and children should a divorce take place; but when no such articles existed, the property and children should belong to the father. When there were no articles and no children, the property should be equally divided. But it is reasonable to suppose, that very few marriages would be made without a contract embracing these particulars; and all that the law need do, would be to make these contracts binding on the contractors.

A few regulations may be useful concerning the granting of divorces. When both parties desired separation, the divorce should be granted without further inquiry; but when one party only applied, the magistrate should require proof of neglect or ill-treatment, and give the other party an opportunity of being heard in defence. The same is now the case with contracts between master and servant: when both agree, the contract is void; when only one party desires it, he takes the case before a magistrate, who, upon a sufficient showing, grants the desired relief.

The above is only a rude sketch of a better system of marriage, but reason and experience would soon perfect it when brought into operation. Let it be once taken out of the hands of the

priests, and all minor obstacles would soon vanish. The grand object is to make marriage a civil contract, binding no longer than it conduces to the happiness of the parties contracting.

Who could complain, were such a system to be put in force? None but the priests. Those who were happily yoked together could have no reason to complain, because it would in no way affect them; and those who were unhappily yoked, would feel it a blessing.

Some persons may be led to suppose, judging from the present social state, that under such a system divorces would be very frequent. This is not my opinion. I do not think they would be more frequent than separations now are. When a divorce could be easily obtained, each party would feel interested in keeping the good opinion of the other; self-interest, the strongest of all motives, would be ever at hand to restrain their passions and regulate their behaviour and conduct. During courtship, this self-interest acts in all its vigour, and its effects are every where apparent; at this time the worst tempered persons generally make themselves agreeable to each other. Under the present system, when courtship is succeeded by marriage, this powerful motive is lost, and the consequences are evident: the generality of married persons study to be agreeable no longer. *But marriage, under the system I advocate, would be but a continued courtship; and a continued desire and endeavour to please would be, evidently, the results.* The following paragraph from the "Examiner," headed—"A Native American's Notions of Wedlock," is apposite to the above argument:—

"An aged Indian, who for many years had spent much of his time among the white people, both in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, one day observed, that the Indians had not only a much easier way of getting a wife than the whites, but were also more certain of getting a good one; for, said he in his broken English, white man court—court—may be one whole year! May be two years! before he marry. Well—may be then got very *good* wife—may be not! may be very cross! Well, now, suppose cross—scold as soon as get awake in the morning—scold all day—scold until sleep—all one; he must keep *him*! White people have law forbidding throwing away wife, be *he* ever so cross—must keep him always!—Well, how does Indian do? Indian, when he sees industrious squaw, which he like, he go to *him*, place his two forefingers close aside each other—make two look like one—look squaw in the face—see *him* smile—which is all one *he* says *yes*! So he take him home—no danger if *he* be cross. No, no, squaw know too well what Indian do if *he* be cross—throw *him* away and take another! Squaw love to eat meat—no husband no meat! Squaw do every thing to please husband—he do the same to please squaw—live happy."

I think it may be safely stated that one marriage out of every ten, under the present system, proves unhappy; that is, the parties would gladly separate if they could; and I think I can as safely say that nine out of every ten of these unhappy marriages are occasioned by the system itself. Now, if a new system would prevent nine-tenths of the present unhappy marriages, and give freedom to the remainder, it is surely of the greatest importance to the happiness of society that it should be made known and adopted. That I do not overrate the evils of the present system, let every one judge from the specimens of social life which surround him.

What is the life of two persons disgusted with each other, and yet compelled to live together? A life of vexation, of misery. The home which should be a paradise, is a hell; the persons who should conduce to each's happiness, are considered each other's persecuting demons. They avoid each other as much as possible, which only tends to make matters worse: but too generally the husband strives to forget his home and his partner in the company and habits of Bacchanalians; and the wife, to be a match for her drunken husband who is abroad, indulges in drunkenness at home. Instead of acting together for their mutual welfare, they both work for their mutual destruction. Neither feels any inducement to great exertions to obtain worldly advancement, because neither wishes to see the other advanced. When they have to depend on their own exertions for support, poverty is a matter of course; and each curses the other as the cause of their misfortunes. From such a life "Good Lord deliver us."

But these are not the only sufferers. Relations, friends, neighbours, all come in for a share. Some side with one party, some with the other, and thus enmity is generated among all with whom they have any connection. When the party is in high life, an interruption is given to their social intercourse, their family visits, so necessary to pass off the listlessness or *ennui* attending those who have nothing to do: when in low life, their continual quarrels interrupt the harmony of the neighbourhood, and embitter the existence of those persons with whom they come in immediate contact.

But it is the example, the bad education which those persons who are unhappily married bestow on their children, that is the most injurious to society. As the parents are always quarreling, the children naturally learn to quarrel also. All their bad passions are brought into play, while their intellectual faculties are almost wholly neglected; and the result is that they generally become bad members of society. This happens not so much from the bad habits which they acquire as from the preponderance which such an education gives to the animal propensities. It is proved by Phrenologists, that the strength, activity, and developement of

the brain are greatly influenced by education. When the intellectual faculties are kept in continued action, and the animal propensities and passions as free as possible from excitation, a fuller developement of the organs of the former takes place ; and if the child's organization were but tolerably good at first, a preponderance is thus given to the faculties most useful to mankind. But when, as is the case with the children of parents who are continually at variance with each other, the principal activity is given to the animal passions, that organization must have been good indeed which does not acquire a preponderating developement of the injurious organs.

It also gives birth to a species of tyranny and slavery throughout the family, from the father to the youngest child. The husband, a slave to drunkenness or his unbridled passions, is a tyrant to his wife ; she is a tyrant to her children ; and they are, consequently, tyrants and slaves towards each other according to their respective powers. It has been often and truly said that slaves are always the greatest tyrants when they have an opportunity. How can children, who have seen nothing but ill-will, quarrelling and abuse between their parents, and received nothing else from their hands, be supposed to make good husbands or wives, fathers or mothers, neighbours or citizens ? We may as well expect gentleness in the tiger or ferocity in the sheep. A few rare cares of each may be found, but the chance against finding is as a mountain to an ant-hill. When priests shall teach truth, lawyers deal honestly by their clients, and quack-doctors perform what they promise, then may we expect to find good citizens springing from unhappy marriages. When family discord, drunkenness and abuse shall be considered as increasing the comforts of social life, then may we with propriety laud the present system of marriage and all its supporters ; but till then I will give my voice against it, and, wherever an opportunity occurs, pronounce it **THE PEST OF SOCIETY.**

I am aware that prejudices will occasion many to think very differently from me on this subject ; but I give a general invitation to all to discuss the matter, in order, if possible, that every prejudice on the subject may be removed. The principal questions are :—Are there any advantages attached to the present system which could not be obtained by another, allowing freedom of divorce ? Would there be any disadvantages attending freedom of divorce to equal the disadvantages attending the present system ?

R. H.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REPUBLICAN.

SIR,

If the following is a worthy and proper subject for your "Republican," by inserting it in a corner, you will oblige an admirer of your disinterested conduct, and a regular reader. S.

ON BURYING.

In the first place, what is the meaning of the words, "to bury?" To inter—to put under the earth—to hide—to conceal, &c.: and in the second place, what is or was the origin and intention of burying? As to its origin, that is hid in fable; but we may be allowed to suppose the intention, and, in my humble opinion, that was—that an object once dear to them might be hid from their eyes whilst undergoing the putrefactive process or corruption, which, from its very constituent principles, it cannot avoid, and which takes place soon after life is extinct, especially in warm countries, which history informs us were first peopled. Some tribes of the North American Indians have large sheds erected at a good distance from their huts, or little townships; there they deposit the remains of their relatives, and visit them but on particular occasions. Here Nature prompts them wisely "and they know it not:" her intention is that they may not be incommoded by the smell;—nay, their very lives may be sacrificed. We follow another natural instinct (is it instinct or reason? I think the former) and bury them. It is the gas escaping from the body while undergoing the putrefactive fermentation that renders the neighbourhood of churchyards not only disagreeable but unwholesome: but by being deeply deposited in the earth can counteract in a great measure the danger, by not allowing the gases a free escape, but by acting as a valve. Quere. May not the gases combine with the earth? But why all this fuss and humbug about burials—the quieter, I think, it is gone about the better—it is but the removal of a nuisance: it is hard to make us confess so much. Those who were once near and dear to us a nuisance! Yes, only visit a dissecting room, and be convinced: you will say the smell is rather disagreeable, but it can be proved by chemistry that it is unwholesome. But would you apply the same to our relatives as you would to a dissecting room? Yes: only in a less degree. They are all subject to the same laws. If I had a piece of land I would set apart a small piece of it as a burying-ground; have no service read, a plain white box—call it a coffin or what you please—and none of those expensive galas which we see now-a-days. What unconsecrated ground—no service—a white coffin—not so much as a few friends!!! Oh! dear!!! Nay, if I was of any use for dissection,

they (the Doctors) should have me. I have got over a few of these scruples—I have seen life in all its forms. High and low; rich and poor; young and old; grave and gay; bond and free. I have seen the rich long for what the poor possessed—health! The young wishing to be older; the grave attempting gaiety; the bond praying for freedom. I have seen young children born, and I have seen old men die. I have seen them buried, and I have seen them raised again. I have seen all kinds of operations, and I have seen all the different parts of the body dissected, and pray where is the fault—if the dead are of any use to the living let them be used. We all believe after the soul has quitted the body it is a piece of clay. Well, what harm is there in dissecting a piece of clay if it is to be of any use to the living. I have heard it urged—aye, and seriously, if the body be dissected one part thrown here, another there, a third burnt, trampled under foot, or destroyed, and all cut and mangled with the knife of the dissector, what will become of it at the general resurrection? Just what will become of those who have lost an arm or a leg abroad, or not buried with the body? I answer, if ever such an event take place as a general resurrection of the self-same body, an omnipotent hand who could frame it, could as easily bring the several parts together again, how much soever they may be scattered, though we left a part in every quarter of the world. Besides, granting we had a good, comfortable, quiet, and respectable burial, there is a part of us devoured as food by insects, and digested; one part of the creation is prey and nourishment for another, and why should we wish to exempt ourselves more than any other from a law of nature? And if we are eaten by insects, it is a question what becomes of us, where the insect may deposit us, we must be turned into dust, thus fulfilling part of the Mosaic law, “Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return;” or that insect may be devoured by another, and part of us with it—that other by a third—the third by a fourth, and so on. For my own part, I think it quite as agreeable to be dissected as eaten by a worm. If this fuss about resurrectioning and dissecting continue, in a few years we shall know no more about the human body than our ancestors did five hundred years ago. My opinion is, that there is too much noise made about burials; in the first instance, they ought in consistency with nature to be conducted quietly, soberly, and with no show. I shall make no remarks about the Church burial-service, let it speak for itself; but in the article of coffins we are shamefully extravagant. Let us take a copy from the Jews—just plain white wood; and so it ought, it serves only a temporary purpose, merely to cover the dead from the gazing eye of the living. I could wish those who provide such dashing and fashionable, aye, patent coffins for their relatives, only saw how unceremoniously they are treated by the Resurrectionists, it would cure them of their extra-

vagance. They think, forsooth, it is paying a respect to the dead: use them respectfully when living—treat the dead only as a piece of clay.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE REPUBLICAN."

SIR,

Nottingham, Aug. 10, 1826.

As we seldom put our pen to paper except to deliver ourselves of a fit of the spleen, or drive away a legion of blue devils, it rather puts us out of the way to call our talents into requisition, when we are in a good humour. As we write to please ourselves more than the public, we shall not libel them by telling them that they are what they are not.

It is a pity but that mankind had more sense, it is lamentable that they have no more feeling, than to oppress the widow and the fatherless; it is shameful that they should oppress and abuse those who differ from them in matters of opinion. The town of Nottingham is in an uproar, the Saints are in a sweat, and all the bigots and blackguards are in a ferment—and for what? Because a woman is exposing Paine's "Age of Reason" and Palmer's "Principles of Nature" for public sale. The ire of the Christians is dreadful. The door has been broken open at midnight, and every annoyance that a few illiterate knaves are capable of planning has been put into execution. Infidel publications have hitherto been sold in this town in a private way, and a public exhibition of these works has given an impetus to the mind of the multitude which will not speedily be forgotten.

The interest which is excited is immense; at night crowds are collected round the door and window, to see this novel show. Discussion of all kinds is going on in the street. Women do not fail to pour out a malediction on Mrs. Wright, as they pass by, and some animals in the shape of men follow their example. Every blockhead is condemning books he never read—every bigot feels himself scandalized by the show—every fanatic is enraged at the exhibition—every blackguard is prating about public tranquillity—and every monster of iniquity is prosing upon the demoralizing effects of infidelity.

Gunpowder has been declared the proper remedy for this nuisance by some, and the interference of the law by others. There are but few Christians that are *humble* and *mild* enough to allow the woman to proceed on her own way without interference.

This morning, a lawyer of the name of Hopkinson, has threatened her with a prosecution; but we fancy it is mere vapour. This

fellow is nicknamed *Brassy*, from his impudence and the hardness of his face.

" His life is one continued scene
Of all that's infamous and mean."

Priestcraft is the bane of society—it is the upas tree that poisons our happiness, and blights our fairest prospects. It has spread its pestilential influence over the globe, and man falls prostrate before it. It robs him of the produce of his industry, and yet he clings to it. Alas! he is ignorant of the cause of his misery—he groans beneath his burden; but knows not what it is that oppresses him. Its poison stultifies his senses, and blunts his perceptions, and, like the drunkard and the opium-eater, he clings to it for relief and it *destroys him*.

We remain yours, &c.

SMITH and LARUS.

RICHARD CARLILE *versus* THE SHERIFF OF LONDON.

I HAD begun to fear, that I should not again see Mr. Parkins, the late Sheriff, who has for some time taken up his abode in France, and that, consequently, I should be defeated in my purposed action against him, or the office of Sheriff, for the treatment which I have received in the seizure and detention of my stock of 1819. But, luckily, I met him in Chancery Lane, about a fortnight ago, and immediately instructed an attorney to prepare to proceed. On Wednesday last the attorney succeeded in serving Mr. P. with a writ of trespass, which binds his appearance to the action. My present case has many more aggravated features than it had in 1822, when the last action was tried. I have since that time suffered all the consequences of the seizure and misapplication of the property. I have, owing to that seizure and misapplication, suffered an imprisonment of three years. A part of the property has been sold which might as well have been sold three years earlier. Another part has been returned to me, a large portion of which was in a damaged state, from the various removals and knockings about which it has sustained through six years. Some articles are not accounted for, either by sale or return. So that, under all these circumstances, under all these evident and admitted illegalities, I shall be much surprised, if another jury be found to say on their oaths, that I have sustained but *one shilling damage* in all the wrong done.

I have another important object in view, in bringing this action, which I intend to conduct in person, and that is, to shew

the gross abuses which are practised in the city of London, in the name of the Sheriff, by a set of subordinate officers, who are not of his appointment. I can do Mr. Parkins the justice to say, that I verily believe, he had no act or part, beyond the use that was made of his name, in the treatment which I have received. As certain persons used his name to do me an injury; I must use his name in the pursuit of compensation from those persons.

I have not relinquished the idea of an action against the Dorsetshire Sheriffs and Magistrates, for the treatment which I received from them. I am collecting evidence of their conduct towards me beyond the walls of the Gaol, in refusing admission to many respectable persons, and in various other outrages; and I hope to be ready to proceed as soon as I have done with the Sheriffs of London.

R. C.

MR. BEARD AND MR. WARD.

I AM informed, that each of these gentlemen cries *victory* in his correspondence with me. Placards, announcing that of the former, I am told, decorate the Unitarian chapels throughout the country; and the bills of Mr. Ward have been profusely stuck about the walls of London. This cannot fail to do good, as it will excite many timid Christians to examine the subject. I rejoice in the triumphs of Messrs. Beard and Ward, I will rejoice wherever I see truth developed and error removed.

But what have they done? They undertake to prove that such a person as Jesus Christ existed and died according to the descriptions of the four Gospels of the New Testament. Have they done this? I cannot see that they have done it. Minutely and acutely as Mr. Beard treats the subject, I cannot perceive that he has carried the existence of Christianity one point beyond the letter of Pliny. The letter of Pliny says, that Christians had existed in and about Bithynia for some years, grant twenty years, but it does not say that they came from Judea. It says, that the Christians of Bithynia sang hymns to a god called Christ; but it does not say that Christ was a god, crucified and put to death in Judea. He describes the Christians as far as he appears to have obtained information of them; but he describes them no further than as a sect that has originated in the neighbourhood from which he writes. He speaks of hymns; the Pagans had hymns; but he says nothing of Revelations, Epistles, or Gospels. He says their assemblies were *nocturnal*, and describes them as a sort of Masonic or secret society, bound by an oath to certain observances. These were not the Christians of the Gospels.

All well-read persons in the history of Pliny's time admit that a great variety of philosophical and fanatical sects existed, particularly throughout the Grecian Provinces, Egypt and the Mediterranean Coast of Africa. Pliny's Christians were clearly one of those sects, and not such Christians as exist in the present day. All the various sects now call themselves Christians; but each excludes the other from the right to the title. The Unitarians are not Christians, said the Chaplain of the Cold Bath Fields prison to me a few days ago. The Trinitarians are not Christians, say the Unitarians and Freethinking Christians; and thus the thing goes on. We are either all Christians or there are no Christians. The title is only respectable and rational when applied to the allegorical sense of Christianity under the head of the persecution and triumph of the principle of reason.

R. C.

MR. ROBERT GOURLAY.

THIS gentleman still lingers through an imprisonment which can only be terminated by one of two ways, by a relinquishment on the part of the Crown of the demand for bail as a security for his future behaviour, or by giving that bail which would be tantamount to an admission of his insanity.

The question resolves itself to this point:—Is a man, for having assaulted another, to be imprisoned for life, if he do not find bail, lest he assault again the same or some other person? Is there to be no definite imprisonment for a want of bail, or a refusal to give it in such a case?

Mr. Gourlay's assault on Mr. Brougham was of the least offensive kind. It was not an assault that did a bodily injury to Mr. Brougham. And surely an imprisonment of years is atonement enough for an aggravated assault. It does not appear that Mr. Gourlay meditates further assault upon Mr. Brougham, or that Mr. Brougham fears any thing of the kind; there is therefore no ground to inflict imprisonment on the part of the Crown. The imputed insanity is a fiction. If such a man as Robert Gourlay is to be deemed insane, every eccentric or prominent character is involved in the imputation. What is insanity?

If the question were fully discussed, it would be found, in different degrees, to be universal, and that no human being is strictly of sane mind. Sanity of mind is a human quality yet to be produced. Insanity, therefore, should not be held criminal until criminal acts have been committed, and such acts should be atoned for in the ratio of their criminality.

There is a morbidness of feeling about Mr. Peel in such cases as that of Gourlay and those of Campion, Perry, and Clarke, confined in the Compter. The Chaplain of the Cold Bath Fields' Prison has told me, that, as soon as he got William Tunbridge to acknowledge the errors of his former opinions about Christianity, and that he had committed the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, giving him credit for sincere conversion, he wrote to Mr. Peel, and got him immediately liberated. A question presents itself on the subject—*Whether the liberation was owing to the change of opinion, or the idea of sufficient atonement for past offence.* In either point of view, there is a morbidness of feeling apparent on the part of Mr. Peel. If the change of opinion produced the liberation, then the opinion was the offence; if the length of time that imprisonment was suffered, then the liberation depending on the interference of the Chaplain looks bad—and the continued confinement of those now confined for similar acts aggravates the symptoms. Mr. Peel should not forget, that the accumulating injuries of such individuals will be likely eventually to burst upon him in a storm which he may not expect.

R. C.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"A DEIST" has mistaken the tenour of the Rev. Mr. Taylor's advertisement in the "Morning Herald." The Reverend Orator's Oration for the Tuesday evening's discussion of this week was not that he would refute Deism—but that he would refute the "Deism Refuted" of the Rev. Thomas Hartwell Horne.

We are about to publish a Third Volume of "The Deist," which is to consist of—Answer to Dr. Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever; Free Enquirer; Good Sense, or natural opposed to supernatural Ideas; Lord Chesterfield's Ears; Analysis of the Influence of natural Religion on the temporal happiness of Mankind. The price will be 12s. in boards; and it will have the God of the Jews and Christians as a frontispiece.